Rockefeller Foundation Fellows for 2000–01

The two recipients of the 2000–01 Rockefeller Foundation Fellows residencies at the Center for Black Music Research are Oliver N. Greene Jr. from Atlanta, Georgia, who is in residence from July 1, 2000, to December 31, 2000, and Julio Cesar de Souza Tavares from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, who will be in residence from January 15, 2001, to July 15, 2001.

Greene, a native of La Grange, Georgia, is assistant professor of ethnomusicology and music humanities at Georgia State University. He holds a Ph.D. in musicology from Florida State University, master of music and master of sacred music degrees in vocal performance and sacred music from Southern Methodist University, and a bachelor of music in vocal performance from the College Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati. His publications include "Belize," in the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, vol. 2 (Garland Publishing, 1998) and "The Dùgù Ritual of the Garinagu of Belize: Reinforcing Values of Society through Music and Spirit Possession," in Black Music Research Journal 18, no. 1/2 (1998). He has presented papers at meetings of the CBMR, the Society for Ethnomusicology, the Society for American Music, the National Association of African American Studies, the American Musicological Society, and at conferences on Afro-Caribbean culture at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida, and Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia. He has taught at Morris Brown College; Clayton College and State University, Morrow, Georgia; Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida; Columbus College and State University, Columbus, Georgia; and the Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia. He has experience performing Ghanaian drumming and dance and Caribbean steel band music and has performed as a baritone soloist in concerts in the United States and Italy. Greene is an expert on music of the Garinagu of Belize and is working on a project titled “Examining Ethnicity through Interarts Inquiries: Exploring the Songs, Costumes, and Dances of Indigenous Rituals of the Garinagu.” His project focuses on the relationships between art, dance, and music in the expression of ethnic identity of the Garinagu, descendants of Africans and Amerindians in Belize.

Tavares, a native of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is adjunct professor at the Institute of Arts and Social Communication, Federal Fluminense University, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin, with a dissertation titled "The African American Non-Verbal Narrative" (1998). He has also completed research residencies at the African Art Museum, Washington, D.C., and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. His several articles are published primarily in Brazilian journals and periodicals. Tavares studies kinesthesisology in Brazilian capoeira and will be working on "Rhythm, Gesture, and Somatic Expression," a study of capoeira, the Afro-Brazilian performance art, and will formulate a theoretical synthesis of rhythmic ideas and perceptions in the African diaspora.

2001 Conference

Details of the Inter-American Conference on Black Music Research can be found on pages 4–5 in this issue. Registration materials will be mailed in early January. Join us in Trinidad for the Memorial Day weekend!
Coming Events
2001

Mar. 30-- Festival of African and African-American Music
Apr. 1 St. Louis, Missouri
Apr. 11-14 Annual Meeting, American Culture Association
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
May 23-27 Inter-American Conference on Black Music Research
Joint Meeting with the Society for American Music
Port of Spain, Trinidad
July 6-10 International Conference, College Music Society
Limerick, Ireland

From the Director

A new initiative has been born at the CBMR. In June, six scholars met in Miami,
Florida, to discuss implications of linguistic practices for the analysis of music in the
African Diaspora and to lay the groundwork for future exploration of this possible area
of research in black music. In addition to myself, this task force included

- Morris Goodman, retired Professor of Linguistics, Northwestern University;
- Gerhard Kubik, University of Vienna, Austria, and the Oral Literature
  Programme in Chieka, Malawi;
- J. H. Kwabena Nketia, International Centre for African Music and Dance,
  University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana;
- Gilbert Sprauve, Professor of Linguistics, University of the Virgin Islands;
- Maureen Warner-Lewis, Professor of Linguistics, University of the West
  Indies;
- and, in absentia, Hollis Urban Liverpool, retired Professor of History,
  University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, and eight-time World
  Calypso King.

Discussions centered around the experiences, publications, and manuscripts of
the members of the group, as well as those of others who have written about subjects
related to the mission of the task force. Especially useful was the content of Nketia's
article titled "Linguistic and Literary Aspects of Style in African Music," upon which he
drew and which he eloquently discussed during the sessions of the day.

This initiative will be concerned with the intimate relationship between music and
language, including issues related to how (1) language can structure music and music
structure language; (2) musical style can be analyzed through both music and
language; (3) instruments and their functions are related to languages; and (4) the
rhetoric of speech governs the rhetoric of the music. Focus will be on linguistic ele-
ments such as stress accents; syllabic structures, placement, and displacement; vowel
lengthening; language idiolects; sound symbolism; verbal ambiguity and verbal par-
allelisms; intonation; phonemes (accent and timbre markers); and others.

By exploring these and other linguistic elements, as well as the musical ones famil-
iar to all of us who study music, it is hoped that answers will be found to the question
of how to analyze music from the perspective of the field of linguistics. For more infor-
mation about this initiative and for a brief and accessible bibliography on the subject,
visit www.cbmr.org/linguistics.htm.

Information about other events and activities at the CBMR are reported through-
out this newsletter and on the CBMR Web site.
The CBMR Web Site

During the past six months, the CBMR Web site has grown and expanded to include a number of new, enticing, and important areas; these new areas, together with the basic sections of the site, are annotated below.

CBMR Conference (www.cbmr.org/2001.htm)
Details of the Trinidad conference, including information about accommodations, travel, and climate plus a list of links to other related Web sites may be found in this area. In the new year, this area will be expanded to include the abstracts for the CBMR papers that will be presented at the conference plus an online registration form.

The CBMR's NEH Challenge Grant (www.cbmr.org/challenge_grant.htm)
This area provides a description of and an online contribution/pledge form for the challenge grant received by the CBMR from the National Endowment for the Humanities. (See page 20 for details about the grant.)

CBMR International Sites (www.cbmr.org/intlhome.htm)
Consisting of separate Web sites for Africa, Asia and Oceania, the Circum-Caribbean, and Europe, these sites have been established in cooperation with institutions located in the various regions in order to promote and facilitate international scholarship in black music. Each Web site is edited by a regional scholar who gathers information about activities and publications related to black music research within his or her region of the world. Each site is presented in English and in at least one other regional language.

CBMR Discussion Board (www.cbmr.org/cgi-local/Ultimate.cgi)
The discussion board is divided into five forums; its purpose is to facilitate communication between and among black music composers and performers, scholars, and teachers. Forums are also provided for announcements of upcoming performances and for general announcements.

CBMR Publications (www.cbmr.org/publications.htm)
General descriptions of all of the CBMR publications can be found on this page, along with a secure online order form for current or back issues. The CBMR Style Guide and recent issues of CBMR Digest may be found in this area.

CBMR Performances (www.cbmr.org/outperform.htm)
Visitors are kept apprised of the details of future performances by Ensemble Stop-Time or the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble. Also present here are descriptions of the purposes of those groups, their personnel lists, and their performance history.

CBMR Library and Archives (www.cbmr.org/library.htm)
One of the primary missions of realizing the mission of the CBMR is the CBMR Library and Archives, which provides support to researchers and scholars through a variety of resources. The library's area of the CBMR Web site includes a description of the holdings of the library itself and of its research services, an online reference request form, information about donating materials to the collection, lists of archival finding aids for the collection, general bibliographies and discographies of black music materials, and brief definitions of some of the genres and styles about which the CBMR documents, collects, preserves, and disseminates information from all parts of the world.

Jobs in the Field (www.cbmr.org/jobs.htm)
These listings inform visitors about positions available at the universities or organizations that are members of CBMR Institutional Associates.

Holiday Gift-Giving at the CBMR (www.cbmr.org/holiday.htm)
Visit the Holiday Gift-Giving page to order black music-related gifts for your holiday gift list.

CBMR Associates (www.cbmr.org/support.htm)
Join or renew your CBMR Individual or Institutional membership online through our secure site or by printing the form posted in this area for faxing or mailing.

CBMR Bookstore (www.cbmr.org/bookstore.htm)
An affiliate of Amazon.com, the CBMR Bookstore contains links to black music-related books, sound recordings, and printed music for purchase from Amazon.com.
2001 Inter-American Conference on Black Music

The Center's 2001 Inter-American Conference on Black Music Research will be held jointly with the Society for American Music during May 23-27 in Port of Spain, Trinidad. This will be an unforgettable event, not only because of the strong paper sessions by both the CBMR and the Society for American Music but also because of an exciting schedule of unique performance events. Dr. Hollis Urban Liverpool, who is director of Trinidad and Tobago’s Carnival Institute and who is known as "The Mighty Chalkdust," will deliver the conference's keynote address, host several Trinidadian culture bearers in a CBMR session, and emcee a performance event that will feature Trinidad's very best performers.

Performances and Special Events

An Evening of Trinidad and Tobago Performance Traditions, Hollis Urban Liverpool, host, Trinidad Country Club, Thursday, May 24

These exciting performances will include the following performers or musical genres:

- Kalenda stick fighters
- Parang
- Trinidad gospel
- Chutney
- Calypso
- A folk choir
- The reigning champion limbo dancer
- A pan soloist
- African tasso drummers

With the exception of a cash bar, all costs associated with this magnificent event and buffet dinner are included in the conference registration fee (including the special Spouse Registrant). Non-registrants may purchase event tickets for $25. Admission is free for children under 12. Enjoy the very best performers from Trinidad and Tobago.

Tobago Excursion, Friday, May 25, 12 Noon–10:00 P.M.

A conference highlight for those who take advantage of this unique event, organized with the cooperation of the Tobago Culture Council and Classic Tours, Ltd. Following the morning sessions at the Trinidad Hilton, excursion participants will be taken to Piarco Airport to board a 20-minute chartered flight to Tobago. Classic Tours' special excursions in Tobago will include visits to three locations:

- Buccoo Reef. Enjoy an excursion in a glass bottom boat
- Pigeon Point. Relax, swim, and enjoy a private performance to include lambourine bands, gig and reel dances, belé and bongo dances, and folk singers
- Canoe Bay. Enjoy a buffet dinner and experience sea-side Flambeaux (fire lights), the Saka Saka Feast presented by the Pembroke Performers, and African drumming and dancing

The tour package will cost $137 per person and will include all ground transportation, round-trip airfare, meals, and performances.

Conference Reception Banquet, Trinidad Hilton, Saturday, May 26

Enjoy a cash-bar reception, followed by the hotel's famous and extensive Caribbean buffet, served in the poolside patio and performance area. But food and drink are not the only items on the schedule. A full performance will be provided, including calypso, limbo, moko jumbi, pan ensembles, and much more.

Pan Yard Tours

Offered throughout the conference, these tours are your opportunity to visit pan yards where the legendary Trinidadian pan ensembles rehearse and prepare for the annual Panorama competition. Preliminary plans include visits to the top-rated bands in the world, such as The Renegades, All Stars, and Starlift.
Conference Registration and Ticket Prices

Regular $95 ($125 after March 31)
Student $65 ($95 after March 31)
Spouse $45 ($75 after March 31)
One-Day ($10)
Country Club Dinner and Performance (Thursday) $25, children under 12 free

Conference Buffet (Saturday) $35
Tobago Excursion (Friday) $137

Complete conference registration materials will be sent in January. Online registration will also be available at that time.

Trinidad Hilton

The Trinidad Hilton is Trinidad's premier hotel, located in Port-of-Spain, just 15 minutes from Piarco International Airport, the Hilton is a full-service hotel with several dining options, swimming pools, tennis, exercise room, and many other amenities. The special conference rates are available 5 days prior to and 5 days following the conference. To receive the conference rate, your reservation must be confirmed by March 31. Both single and double rooms are available.

Room Rates
Standard $130
Deluxe $150
Executive Floor $175
Extra Persons $20 each

Classic Tours, Ltd., Tours

Classic Tours also offers Trinidad and Tobago tours at a wide variety of times, locations, and prices. You may arrange to participate in their regularly scheduled tours prior to, during, or after the conference. Visit their Web site at www.classictoursltd.com/profile.html for complete tour descriptions, schedules, and costs.

Air Travel

BWIA is the official airline for the CBMR. Discounted rates, excluding taxes, are available from its United States hubs, which are located in New York (JFK; US$351), Washington, D.C. (Dulles; US$351), and Miami (Miami International; US$340).
New Julia Perry Editions Received

The Helen Walker-Hill Collection of scores by African-American women composers in the CBMR Library and Archives now includes new unpublished editions of five works by Julia Perry that previously had been unavailable. Four of the works date from the 1970s, when Perry suffered a paralytic stroke that severely impaired her ability to write. She continued to compose, but the scores that survive from this period are illegible, often incomplete, or only in parts and in deteriorating condition. In 1998, Dr. Walker-Hill received a grant from the Thanks Be to Grandmother Winifred Foundation to reconstruct, edit, and create computer scores of the five works. Todd Vunderink, editor at PeerMusic Publishing Company, generously loaned the manuscripts from the company’s archives, and Christopher Hahn assisted in the computer editing. The five works are Symphony no. 13 for Wind Quintet, Divertimento for Five Wind Instruments, Quinary Quixotic Songs, Symphony no. 10 (“Soul Symphony”), and Symphony no. 4. The printed scores, with a tape of the MIDI realizations, can be used at three locations: the CBMR, the American Music Research Center at the University of Colorado, and PeerMusic in New York.

Spotlight on: The Oral Literature Research Programme, Chileka, Malawi

The Oral Literature Research Programme in Chileka, Malawi, researches and documents oral literature, music, and other cultural expressions in southeast Africa. The director is Moya Aliya Malamusi, who founded the Programme in 1989 with his late sister, Lidya Malamusi. Since then, the Programme has collected over 2,000 sound recordings, video recordings, images, and field notes in Malawi and has participated in cooperative documentation and research efforts in Namibia, Zambia, and Uganda.

In April of 2000, the Oral Literature Research Programme and the Chileka Cultural Theatre Production sponsored a show at Chileka Airport Football Ground that featured music, drama, poetry, and folktales. The aim of the production was to promote local traditional artists who have been virtually unknown to the public. It included street musicians who earn money for food by performing around Chileka, drama groups that were organized by airport workers, and local poets who entertained the crowd. Headmen and dignitaries from several local villages attended as invited guests; they expressed appreciation for this effort to present and promote disappearing local art forms.

The Oral Literature Research Programme has also built a small two-room recording studio to record local musicians, who can then make cassettes to be sold in local markets. The first product of the Programme is a CD titled From Lake Malawi to the Zambezi: Aspects of Music and Oral Literature in South-East Africa in the 1990s (Pammap 602, LC 07203), which was produced in Frankfurt, Germany, by Popular African Music/African Music Archive. The CD, which has become a critical favorite in Germany, will be distributed free of charge to educational institutions in Malawi, with the hope that it will assist in the preservation and teaching of traditional culture.

A reception announcing the CD, hosted by the German Embassy, was held in the Oral Literature Research Programme’s Jacaranda Video Centre in Chileka on August 24, 2000. Attendees included Mr. Peter Mende, Chargé d’Affaires of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Lilongwe, and scholars Dr. Kings Phiphi from the University of Malawi, Zomba, Dr. Mitchel Strumpf of Africa University, Mutari, and Dr. Wolfgang Bender of the University of Mainz. The event included an introductory lecture by Malamusi and performances by traditional musicians.

The Programme, which is privately funded, can be reached at P.O. Box 75, Chileka, Blantyre District, Malawi; telephone and fax: 011265-692-357.

Members of College Trustees Host Development Soirée

Columbia College Trustees Madeline Murphy-Rabb, Barry Mayo, and Lerone Bennett Jr. co-hosted a soirée in Ms. Rabb’s residence on May 25 to raise matching funds for the Center’s National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant, which will ultimately yield a $1.8 million CBMR endowment. Legendary performer and teacher William Warfield was the college’s special guest for the event and received a gift copy of the new International Dictionary of Black Composers in honor of his 80th birthday. The event was successful in raising the bulk of the first $50,000 installment for NEH matching funds.

For more information about the NEH Challenge Grant and a pledge form, see page 20.
Season's Greetings
from the center for black music research

Have a friend for whom you're having difficulty finding a gift? Consider a gift subscription to a CBMR publication or a membership in one of the CBMR societies. You can lend your support to the Center for Black Music Research and simultaneously encourage your colleagues in their black music research interests.

A variety of special offers are available only on the CBMR Web site for publications, CDs, or memberships that would make wonderful gifts this holiday season. Visit www.cbmr.org/holiday.htm and place your order on the CBMR's secure site.

Please note that these prices are available only on the CBMR Holiday Gift Page from now until January 3, 2001.

❖ Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry. The final issue of this ground-breaking journal will be published early in 2001. A gift subscription for vol. 5 is $25.
❖ CBMR Monographs. Four issues are currently in print. Choose an issue for only $10 or choose the set for $35.
❖ A Star in the East: A Spiritual Christmas, Thomas Young, tenor (Ocean Records OR.107), is available for $12.
❖ CBMR Individual Gift Associate Memberships are available for a limited time for $50.
❖ Alton Augustus Adams Society Individual Gift Memberships are available for a limited time for $100.
❖ Give any of the items available on Amazon.com and make a small contribution to the CBMR by entering the Amazon.com Web site from the CBMR Holiday Gift Page. Just click on the link provided on the Holiday Page.

Happy Holidays from all of us at the Center for Black Music Research!
Rediscovering Trinidad Folk Music

Amelia Ingram

In light of the upcoming 2001 Inter-American Conference on Black Music in Trinidad, Kalinda column readers might be curious about local musical traditions beyond the well-known steelbands and calypso. For this reason, a short discussion of Alan Lomax's 1962 West Indian field recordings, which have recently been re-released on Rounder Records' Caribbean Voyage series, is pertinent. These CDs—along with their accompanying book, Brown Girl in the Ring: An Anthology of Song Games from the Eastern Caribbean (Lomax, Elder, and Lomax Hawes 1997)—are an important contribution to the ethnomusicology of Trinidad.

Alan Lomax began recording and researching the music of the Lesser Antilles in 1962 with the aid of the Rockefeller Foundation, partly inspired by his support for the institution of a Federation of the West Indies (Lomax, Elder, and Lomax Hawes 1997, x). The project's political overtones coincided with Lomax's scholarly theories, which posited an overarching West Indian Afro-Creole culture and language. The project also used the ethnomusicologist's informant-empowering methodology of "cultural feedback"; Lomax played recordings back to villagers, soliciting verbal responses (Lomax 1999, 2).

Although a unified federation never materialized, Lomax's research did succeed in promoting local interest in musical traditions, which raises ethical questions about cultural revitalization: what roles should local and foreign musicians, scholars, and governments play in such movements? This question still resonates today, as ethnomusicologists, like Lomax, place themselves in similar research contexts. Another question invoked has to do with values. Lomax believed that playing back his recordings instilled the music with "cultural value" to villagers (Lomax, Elder, and Lomax Hawes 1997, x). The high-profile 1962 project largely defined the type of support that Trinidadian folk music subsequently received from the local community and government. This is significant when we take into account the fact that nationalized traditions such as calypso and steelband otherwise might never have received governmental support (see Steumpfle 1995, 141–148).

How does musical scholarship affect the values that societies place upon particular repertoires? Perhaps looking back on Lomax's work will inspire today's scholars to give more careful thought to the historical repercussions of their research methods.

Lomax produced many live-radio broadcasts and concerts in the United States. Rounder has released a recording of a 1945 "Midnight Special" calypso concert that took place in New York City's Town Hall. Lomax, the concert's emcee, had such good rapport with the performers (most of whom lived in New York City) that the concert came across as an intimate affair among friends. He drew out informative and entertaining personal accounts of calypso's origins and instrumentation from calypsonians MacBeth the Great and Lord Invader (for example, the musicians reported that the bottle-and-spoon musical instrument is known to locals as the "Trinidadian harp"). The obvi-
Join the Alton Augustus Adams Society
A support organization for CBMR Caribbean Initiatives

The Center for Black Music Research of Columbia College Chicago has established the Alton Augustus Adams Society to honor the rich and varied accomplishments of **Alton Augustus Adams Sr. (1889–1987)**, the first black bandmaster in the United States Navy. Help support the initiatives and programs of the Center for Black Music Research in the Caribbean by joining the Alton Augustus Adams Society and

- Assist in perpetuating the Center’s black music activities and research initiatives in the Circum-Caribbean;
- Support the preservation of historic documents that otherwise might be lost forever;
- Endorse the Center’s ongoing research and its public dissemination of information about the rich cultural legacy produced by people of African descent;
- Help create and enhance, over time, a base of annual support for the activities of the Center for Black Music Research, which will foster continued activities in research, preservation, dissemination, and performance of black music in the Western hemisphere and beyond.

To join or to learn more, please visit www.cbmr.org/AAA or contact Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1996; telephone: (312) 344-7559; fax: (312) 344-8026.

**Charter Members**
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- Family Trust, Alton L. Adams
- Life Member
- Richard A. Long

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**The Alton Augustus Adams Society Enrollment Form (Individual Enrollment)**

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☐ **Individual Life Member** (includes life CBMR Associate membership)
   Enclosed is my one-time donation of $ _______________ ($2,000 minimum)

☐ **Individual Sustaining Member** (includes annual CBMR Associate membership)
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☐ **Individual Member** (includes annual CBMR Associate membership)
   Enclosed is my enrollment donation of $ _______________ ($125 minimum, with $100 annual renewals)

☐ I do not wish to become a member of the Society at this time, but wish to make a $ _______________ contribution

☐ Enclosed is my check (made payable to Columbia College/CBMR)

☐ Please bill: ☐ AMEX ☐ Discover ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

Name (as it appears on credit card) ________________________________
Account # ________________________________ Expiration Date ________________________________
Signature ________________________________ Date ________________________________

Enrollment donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

☐ I will pledge to recruit at least one additional member for the society

Please return enrollment form to: Alton Augustus Adams Society, Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605-1996.

*If you are paying by credit card, you may fax the form to (312) 344-8029.*
In Memoriam

Composer, conductor, and pianist Margaret Harris died in New York on March 7, 2000. Harris, who began her career as a concert pianist at the age of three, conducted many American orchestras, served as a cultural specialist for a production of Porgy and Bess in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and served as music director for the Broadway musical Hair.

Wendell Wright died in Baltimore on May 24, 2000. From the late 1970s through the early 1990s, he organized Baltimore's Lois J. Wright Memorial Concert Series, which served as a showcase for black performers.

Latin jazz great Tito Puente died in New York on June 1, 2000. Puente, who first rose to fame during the mambo craze of the 1950s, studied conducting and orchestration at Juilliard. He recorded more than one hundred albums and received five Grammy awards, the last in February 2000.

John Steiner, jazz scholar and collector, died in Milwaukee on June 3, 2000. By vocation an academic who taught chemistry at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Steiner began collecting jazz records in the 1930s, purchased and reissued recordings from the Paramount label, and continued to issue recordings made in Chicago on his own S&D label. He also wrote extensively on jazz in Chicago.

Saxophonist Stanley Turrentine died September 12, 2000, in New York. Turrentine began his career playing with Ray Charles, Max Roach, and Earl Bostic. He became famous for his ability to cross jazz with popular genres.

New Collections of Note

A remarkable collection of recordings by black and black-influenced performers from 1920 and earlier has been donated to the CBMR by collector Fred Crane. The collection of more than five hundred recordings includes several early recording formats: wax cylinders, single-sided tin-ten-inch disks, and twelve-inch, five-inch, and seven-inch disks, in addition to standard 78s. Artists represented include Roland Hayes; Florence Cole Talbert; the Jubilee quartets of Fisk, Hampton, and Tuskegee Universities; various other Jubilee quartets; the bands of James Reese Europe and W. C. Handy; early blues performers Mamie Smith, Lucille Hegamin, and Ethel Waters; and Bert Williams and other vaudeville performers.

Recordings of the concerts in the Lois J. Wright Memorial Concert Series, which were organized by Wendell Wright and took place in Baltimore from the late 1970s through the mid 1990s, have been donated by Dorothy Wright. The collection contains over 300 reel-to-reel tapes, cassettes, and videos. The concert series featured established artists and provided performance opportunities for up-and-coming black performers. Artists who appeared on the series include Robert McFerrin, the Duo Pro Viva, Kevin Short, Mattiwilda Dobbs, and Louise Toppin.

The CBMR has received office files, books, recordings, and other materials of the Paul Robeson 100th Birthday Committee, based at Columbia College Chicago. The files comprise information about Robeson collected from various sources during the Robeson Centennial celebration.

Think about the CBMR for your tax-deductible contributions in 2000.

News and Notes

Frank Townsell performed piano works by Blind Boone from his CD Blind Boone's Piano Music (Laurel Records LR-860) at a concert on April 18, 2000, in London, England, sponsored by the Centre for Intercultural Music Arts and the Music and Drama Academic Group of the University of London.

Of One Blood: Returning Home to Africa, a film by Nana Kwasi Scott Douglas Morrow and Nnamdi Kosua Brenda Berg-Morrow, was a featured presentation at the 1999 United Nations Day at the Queens Museum of Art in New York. The film has won numerous awards since its premiere at the 1999 Black International Cinema Festival in Berlin, Germany.

William Eddings, the resident conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, has won the Seaver/National Endowment for the Arts Conductors Award, a career-development grant amounting to $50,000.

Bernice Johnson Reagon has been selected as the first recipient of the Leeway Laurel, an award that recognizes a woman's lifelong achievement in the arts. According to Leeway founder Linda Lee Alter, "Dr. Reagon's accomplishments, from civil rights activism to the preservation of African-American culture, are so important, and her energy so impressive, that she was the overwhelming choice of our selection committee. We are thrilled to present to her the first-ever Leeway Laurel, which will be given biennially to a woman who inspires others, both as an artist and as a person."

Alyn Shipton's book Groovin' High: The Life of Dizzy Gillespie, published by Oxford University Press in 1999, has won the 2000 ARSC Award for Excellence in Historical Recorded Sound Research from the Association for Recorded Sound Collections in the Recorded Jazz category. CBMR Associate Charles Wolfe received the lifetime-achievement award.

In honor of the retirement of Willis Patterson, Professor of Music and Associate Dean of the School of Music, a week-long symposium titled "The Fine and Performing Arts of African-Americans: Enhancing Education" took place at the University of Michigan in March 2000. Musical highlights included a concert of works by African-American composers performed by an all-black orchestra and interpreted by a panel comprised of William Banfield, Adolphus Hailstork, and Patricia Rushen, who was featured soloist. Metropolitan Opera star George Shirley gave the keynote address.
CBMR Performance Activities

The New Black Music Repertory Ensemble

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, Coordinator of Performance Activities and Conductor and Artistic Director of the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble, guided the Center's newest performance ensemble through a highly successful first season of eight performances. Performances in September and October, which opened the group's second season, were thematic: "The Spiritual Fantasies of Frederick Tillis" featured tenor Barrington Coleman and "The Black Composer, the Jazz Idiom, and the Blues" featured works by Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, Leric Jenkins, Dolores White, and Jimmy Heath. On November 18, 2000, the group will complete the first segment of its second season with a performance of works for trumpet and string ensemble, featuring soloist Orbert Davis. The repertoire of the final performance will include works by Adolphus Hailstork, Hoagy Carmichael, Vernon Duke, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, and one of Mr. Davis's own works. Complete programs may be viewed on the Center's Web site (www.cbmr.org). The New BMRE performances have been held at Chicago Park District's South Shore Cultural Center, where the ensemble is in residence.

Ensemble Stop-Time: Year Two

The two-year season of Ensemble Stop-Time officially came to a close on August 27, 2000, with a rousing performance for more than 2,000 people at Little Black Pearl Workshop's "Pearl Fest." Since its debut performance on October 26, 1998, this amazing ensemble of sixteen musicians, conducted by T. S. Galloway, has provided twenty-five lecture-demonstrations and five major performances throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. The Project Stop-Time goal for the ensemble was to present eighteen lecture-demonstrations and two major performances, but the public response to the group was so overwhelming that ways were found to offer an additional seven lecture-demonstrations and three major performances during the life of the project to date.

During the second year of the project, major performances were presented at Skyline Stage on Navy Pier and Symphony Center (see details of the latter below). In addition, nine lecture-demonstrations and four workshops (presented with Chicago's All City Jazz Band) informed and engaged audiences at locations around the city.

Ensemble Stop-Time's tenure was to have concluded in August 2000, but the Center for Black Music Research is in the process of scheduling additional programs during the coming months. Watch the Center's Web site (www.cbmr.org) and future issues of Stop-Time newsletter for confirmed dates.

Symphony Center Special Performance

Ensemble Stop-Time and the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble joined forces to present two performances in Symphony Center's Burnham Hall on May 5 and 6, 2000. The capacity audiences were treated to a unique program that spanned two hundred years—from a movement from the Chevalier de Saint Georges' Violin Concerto in G Major (1775) to Earth, Wind and Fire's smash hit "Shining Star" (1975). About this unique performance, Howard Reich, arts critic for the Chicago Tribune, wrote:

"The Center staged its boldest effort yet in illustrating the grand sweep of black musical tradition, with a concert featuring two of its performance groups: the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble and Ensemble Stop-Time. These bands performed concertos, overtures, stomp blues, solo tunes and more. To hear all of this music in a single, marathon concert was to acquire new respect for the breadth of black musical expression of the past three centuries."

Project Stop-Time and Ensemble Stop-Time are supported in part by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Chicago Community Trust, and The Joyce Foundation. Additional funding for the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble has been awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council, an agency of the State of Illinois.

Festival of African and African-American Music

The International Consortium for the Music of Africa and Its Diaspora (ICMAD), a group of organizations with worldwide membership, is sponsoring a festival of music by African and African-American composers and performers March 30–April 1, 2001, in St. Louis, Missouri. The host organization is the St. Louis African Chorus. Events will include a concert of works for orchestra featuring members of the St. Louis Symphony, conducted by Maestro Julius Kerr-Bertoli, concerts of choral and chamber music and art songs, and composer forums and presentations. ICMAD has previously sponsored a successful conference on African pianism at the University of Pittsburgh as well as several performances in the United Kingdom.

For information about the festival, contact FESAAAM 2001, 634 N. Grand Blvd., Suite 1143, St. Louis, MO 63103-1002; telephone: (314) 652-8800; fax: (314) 652-8444; or e-mail: fesaam@africanchorus.org.
Composers Notes

A park in Warrensburg, Missouri, established during the 1940s to honor pianist/composer John W. "Blind" Boone is being renovated by a local community group. Plans call for a statue of Boone, a gazebo for concerts and events, plantings, and a bike path. For information, contact Sandra Irl, "Warrensburg Parks for the 21st Century," 131 S.W. 300, Warrensburg, MO 64093; telephone: (660) 747-3288; www.blindboonepark.org; fax: (660) 747-0072.

Glenn Burleigh's The Dreamer, for mixed chorus, children's choir, organ, brass choir, piano, bass, drums, and timpani, commissioned by the Choral Arts Society of Washington, D.C., had its world premiere at the Choral Arts Society's 12th choral tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on January 9, 2000. Burleigh is spending the year as artist-in-residence at Lenoir-Owen College in Memphis, Tennessee.

Akín Euba's opera Chakal received its American premiere by the St. Louis African Chorus and an international cast on May 6 and 7, 2000. The chorus also presented a concert of the choral works of Nigerian composer Ikoli Harcourt-Whyte (1905–77) at three venues in St. Louis in February and March. A CD of the concert, A E Na O, is for sale by the chorus at www.africanchorus.org.

William Banfield's Luyafa: Dance Opera in Three Acts premiered March 31 and April 1, 2000, in Durham, North Carolina. Luyafa was a production of the Duke Artists Series, the African American Dance Ensemble, and Triangle Opera.

Jeffrey Mumford has been appointed assistant professor of composition at Oberlin College's Conservatory of Music. Premieres scheduled for this fall include the chamber orchestra version of the still in the dark and the air, by the Cleveland Chamber Symphony on November 20, 2000; as a spray of reflected meadowlight informs the air, sponsored by the Contemporary Music Forum at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., on December 7; and billowing pockets, brightly layered, to be performed by Brave New Works in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The world premiere performance of ten spiritual arrangements by Michael Raphael took place on February 14, 2000, in Topeka, Kansas, by bass Kevin Maynor and the Topeka Symphony Orchestra. Raphael is one of the composers featured on Kevin Maynor's CD The Black Art Song (Fleur de Son 57942).

Kevin Scott's compositions Praeludium In Aeterna and Lazy Lion have been programmed for the 2000–01 season by the Westchester Symphony. Scott made his European conducting debut in Varna, Bulgaria, conducting the Varna Philharmonic Orchestra in a program that included the European premiere of Leo Edwards' Fantasy Overture, which was broadcast on Bulgarian television. He is also a guest conductor with the Manhattan Virtuosi chamber orchestra and plans a concert for February 2001 devoted to the works of Ulysses Kay.

Adolphus Hailstork was a featured speaker at a Southeast Composers Forum, sponsored by Old Dominion University on June 24, 2000. The forum concluded with a concert of winning compositions from a Southeastern Composers Competition for which Hailstork served as one of the judges.

Adolphus Hailstork

Adolphus Hailstork
Kimo Williams has founded ArtSynergy, a program intended to unite artists and nurture relationships between Vietnam and Chicago, in order to provide in-depth cultural exchanges through concerts by traditional performing artists and to produce thematic dual commissions, exhibitions, master classes, and cross-cultural symposia.

Mike Woods’ setting of a poem by e. e. cummings, “I Think of You,” was premiered by Lauralyn Kolb, soprano, and Tina Tognia, piano, at a concert titled “One Hundred Years of American Art Song” at Hamilton College, New York, on September 9, 2000.

On April 8, 2000, Harvard University and the Harvard Jazz Band staged “A Tribute to St. Louis Composers,” honoring the music of jazz legends Julius Hemphill, Oliver Nelson, and Ernie Wilkins. The program celebrated the 30th anniversary of Harvard’s Department of Afro-American Studies.

Several composers have recently received Meet the Composer awards. Adolphus Hailstork will spend a three-week residency with the Albany (Georgia) Symphony as part of the Music Alive program. Commission grants were forthcoming for Top Brass/The Brass Chamber Music Foundation, to commission a work from David Baker; sixteen as One Music, Inc. of New York, for a work from Slide Hampton; the Sutherland Community Arts Initiative of Chicago, for a composition from Malachi Thompson; and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, for a work from Olly Wilson. A consortium of Chicago organizations will host a residency by Ernest Khabeer Dawkins, and groups in Philadelphia and Camden, New Jersey, will host Dwight Andrews.

On April 15, 2000, the International African American Music Society and the Centre for Intercultural Music Arts presented “Out of Africa,” a festival of music and art by Africans and African Americans at St. Michael and All Angels Parish Church, Great Torrington, Devon, England. The highlight of the conference was a concert of organ pieces by black composers performed by Lucius R. Weathersby, assistant professor of music at Dillard University. The program included the U.K. premieres of Wallace Cheatham’s Fanfare and Toccata: Jacob’s Ladder, by Ralph Simpson; and Organ Suite, by Kevin George; also performed were organ works by Fela Sowande, Noel Da Costa, Violet George Bowers, and Uzgee Brown and a new arrangement of William Grant Still’s Summerland for organ and flute. In addition to the concert, Weathersby also recorded some of the works for a forthcoming CD.

Doxology Opera
February 16–17

The Center for Black Music Research, in partnership with Chicago’s Museum for Contemporary Art, will present the world premiere of the music for Doxology Opera: The Doxy Cantatas. The opera was commissioned with funds from Meet the Composer by the CBMR, as lead member of a consortium of presenters. The libretto is by Paul Carter Harrison, playwright-in-residence at Columbia College Chicago; the music is by Wendell Logan of the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music. The premiere performances will be presented at the Museum for Contemporary Art on February 16–17, 2001. Ticket information will be available in the near future, but please mark your calendar now.
Opportunities

Grants and Fellowships
The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a unit of the New York Public Library, announces its Scholars-in-Residence program, open to scholars with advanced degrees who are studying black history and culture and to professionals in fields related to the Schomburg Center’s programs and activities. For information, write to the Scholars-in-Residence Program, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 515 Malcolm X Boulevard, New York, NY 10037-1801; telephone: (212) 491-2228; www.nypl.org/research/sc/scholars/index.html. The application deadline is January 15, 2001.

The University of Iowa Oermann Center for Advanced Studies announces fellowships for a Summer 2001 Research Seminar. The seminar’s theme is “Opera in Context: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Creation, Performance, and Reception.” Applicants must hold a Ph.D. or comparable professional degree. Deadline for applications is January 29, 2001. For more information, contact the Oermann Center, N134 Oakdale Hall, University of Iowa, IA 52242-5000; telephone: (319) 335-4034; fax: (319) 335-4696; or visit www.uiowa.edu/~oermann/seminars.html.

The grants program of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) supports scholarship and publication in the field of sound recordings or audio preservation. Eligible projects include discography and bibliography, historical studies of the sound recording industry and its products, and any other subject likely to increase the public’s understanding and appreciation of the lasting importance of recorded sound. Grants are available up to $1,000. Applications should include a one-page summary of the project, a budget, a curriculum vitae, and an indication of the prospects for publication or public presentation of the project’s results. For more information, contact Richard Warren, Historical Sound Recordings, Yale University Library, P.O. Box 208240, New Haven, CT 06520-8240. The application deadline is February 28, 2001.

Calls for Papers
The National Association for the Study and Performance of African-American Music invites proposals for papers and presentations for the seventh biennial conference, to be held in Birmingham, Alabama, on March 8–10, 2001. Proposals should focus on African and African-American music and performance practices in any genre. Submit proposals to Orville Wright, Conference Chair, 35 Blake Street, Hyde Park, MA 02136; telephone: (617) 747-2404; fax: (617) 381-4465. Application forms and further information can be found at www.naspaam.org. The deadline for submissions is November 30, 2000.

The American Orff-Schulwerk Association will sponsor a research poster session at its national conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 14–16, 2001. Proposals for research dealing with any aspect of music learning through movement, speech, playing instruments, singing, improvisation, or composition in general music or music therapy settings are particularly appropriate. For guidelines and more information, contact Timothy S. Brophy, College of Fine Arts, School of Music, Box 117900, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611; e-mail: tbrophy@midsouth.rr.com. The deadline for submissions is May 15, 2001.

A call for manuscripts has been issued for a volume to be titled Rockin’ las Americas: The Global Politics of Rock in Latin America, edited by Deborah Pacini Hernandez, Hector D. Fernandez L’Hoeste, and Eric Zolov. The editors are seeking essays from different disciplinary perspectives that explore the complex dynamics of the contemporary rock en español phenomenon. Brief (1–2 pages) synopses of proposed manuscripts and curriculum vitae should be submitted to each of the editors by January 1, 2001. The editors prefer manuscripts submitted in English but are willing to work with authors to arrange translation from other languages. For more information, contact Deborah Pacini Hernandez by phone at (617) 666-5308 or e-mail at deborah_pacini_hernandez@brown.edu; Hector Fernandez L’Hoeste by e-mail at fernandez@gsu.edu; or Eric Zolov by e-mail at e_zolov@acad.fandm.edu.

Calls for Scores
The International Alliance for Women in Music announces the 20th IAWM (2001) Search for New Music by Women Composers. Prizes include the Student Composer Prize for works in any medium, open to women currently enrolled in school; the Ellen Taaffe Zwilich Prize for works in any medium, open to women age 21 and under; the Theodore Front Prize for chamber and orchestral compositions, open to women age 22 and over; and the Miriam Gideon Prize for works for solo voice and one to five instruments, open to women age 50 and over. Works submitted must be unpublished, have won no prior awards, and have no prospect of being recorded at the time of entry. Contestants must be IAWM members or be willing to join at the time of entry. For guidelines, contact Marilyn Shrade, College of Musical Arts, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403; e-mail: mshrade@bgnet.bgsu.edu. The IAWM Web site is at music.acu.edu/www/iawm/information.html. The deadline for submissions is January 12, 2001.

American Composers Orchestra announces its tenth annual Whitaker New Music Readings Sessions and Commission. Up to seven composers in the early stages of their careers will be selected to participate. One will be awarded a $15,000 commission to write a new work to be performed by the ACO at Carnegie Hall. The Reading Sessions are led by Music Director Dennis Russell Davies and Artistic Advisor Robert Beaser. They will be held on April 18, 2001, in New York City. The submission form, guidelines, and additional information are available at www.americancomposers.org/wwmr.htm or by contacting Daniel Brodkey, ACO Production Manager, at (212) 977-8495, extension 202, or e-mail Whitaker_readings@americancomposers.org. The deadline for submissions is November 21, 2000.

\nContinued on page 15
Competition

The Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod of North Wales announces a new competition for classical instrumentalists between the ages of 19 and 26 who are in the early stages of their professional careers. The first prize award is £15,000. The Eisteddfod will pay all travel and accommodation costs for twenty selected semi-finalists. Applicants must submit a cover letter, curriculum vitae, letter of recommendation, photographs, and a good quality recording of 12 to 15 minutes of performance. For more information, contact Mark Kennick at Eisteddfod Office, Royal International Pavilion, Abbey Road, Llangollen, North Wales LL20 8SW; fax 1978 882005; or visit www.international-eisteddfod.co.uk. The application deadline is February 1, 2001.

The Sphinx Competition showcases the top young black and Latino string players in the country. Finalists in the Junior Division (performers under 18 years of age) and the Senior Division (performers 18–25) will perform in concerts in Ann Arbor and Detroit, Michigan, in February 2001. Winners receive up to $80,000 in prizes and scholarships. For more information, contact the Sphinx Competition Office at (313) 336-9809.

Illinois Arts Council Funds the New BMRE

The Center has received a grant in the amount of $13,800 from the Illinois Arts Council in support of the 2000–01 season of the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble. Council funds will be used to present the New BMRE in a series of performances of works by black composers at Chicago Park District's South Shore Cultural Center.

Materials Received from Publishers

Books


Scores


Compact Discs


———. The Open Air Meeting. New World Records 80512-2.

Calyxpo Awakening, from the Emory Cook Collection, 1956–1962. Smithsonian Folkways CD 40453.


The Julius Hemphill Sextet. At Dr. King's Table. New World Records 80524-2.


Newton, James. As the Sound of Many Waters. New World Records 80579-2.


Donations to the CBMR Library and Archives
March 1, 2000, to August 31, 2000

James Abbington. Two CDs: Remembering, Discovering, Preserving, Songs of African American History, recorded by the Brazel Dennard Chorale (BDC 4444) and Comes Summertime: Highlights from Riverside Summer Recitals, 1998 (JAV 112), which includes his performances of organ works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Ulysses Kay; plus one program: "Winter Traditions: Songs of the Season. Memories and Melodies with The Brazel Dennard Chorale" (Detroit, December 5, 1999).

Leslie Adams. Scores to three of his art songs published by Art Source Publishing in Cleveland, Ohio: "Alone" (1999); "Christ at a Wedding" (2000); "Midnight of My Soul" (2000).

T. J. Anderson Jr. Program for the premiere performance of William Banfield's opera Luyala, Durham, N.C., March 31-April 1, 2000, signed by the cast, plus five clippings of articles and reviews about the premiere; obituary of Margaret Harris, the Washington Post, March 24, 2000.


Zach Thomas Behrens. LP: The Blues Roll On (Atlantic SD-1352), vol. 6 of the Southern Folk Heritage Series, edited by Alan Lomax.

Edward O. Bland. A demo cassette of a recording of his piano works by Garrick Olson, to be added to his collection.

Glenn E. Burleigh. Two of his scores: Four Spirituals for Bass-Baritone and Piano (Oklahoma City, Okla.: Glenn Burleigh Music Workshop and Ministry, 1999); The Dreamer, op. 45, no. 1 (Oklahoma City: Burleigh Inspirations, 2000).


David Chevan. CD: Avadim Hayinu: Once We Were Slaves (Reckless DC Music RMCD 1301), performed by Warren Byrd, piano, and David Chevan, bass; plus clippings and promotional materials about the CD.


Claudia Courbon. Her video Mazemorra: In Search of Memory (2000).


Caleb Dube. Program for the Chicago Blues Festival 2000 (June 2000).


Dena J. Epstein. About one and one-half inches of clippings and other research materials.


Toya Johnson. Photograph of Walter Barnes (loaned for copying), plus two cassettes containing dubs of commercial recordings by Walter Barnes and His Royal Creolians.


On Ragtime: Scott Joplin’s Treemonisha
Edward A. Berlin

Scott Joplin’s piano rags stand at the heart of his fame. These rag classics continue to exhilarate and thrill players, listeners, and dancers worldwide. If he were known only for his opera Treemonisha, he would be a mere footnote in American music history. Yet, he considered this opera, containing barely three ragtime-influenced numbers, his masterpiece, the work that would make his name and fame as a real composer. Although this opera represented Joplin’s hope for artistic recognition, it was also a highly personal work with references to his early life, to people important to him, and to his ideals. He sets the opera near his childhood home, probably with some specific place in mind, on a plantation within a dense forest “in the state of Arkansas, Northeast of the Town of TXarkana and three or four miles from the Red River.” Reflecting the beginnings of his own education in the white home where his mother worked as a domestic, he tells us in the preface that the seven-year-old Treemonisha obtained her education from a nearby white woman in exchange for her parents’ labors. Some of the opera’s music is of the type he probably heard as a child. The time period that he chooses for the action, September 1884, probably coincides with the birth of his bride, Freddie Alexander, who died ten weeks after their marriage in June 1894. The libretto’s central theme corresponds to his firm belief in the importance of education for African Americans (see Berlin 1990). This personal, reflective libretto, although flawed as drama, merges with the music to reveal a Scott Joplin who might otherwise have remained unknown to us.

Joplin published a piano-vocal score of Treemonisha in 1911, but, despite a lavishly favorable article in The American Musician and Art Journal published on June 24, 1911, he was unable to arrange for a full production. He mounted an informal performance later that year (often mistakenly reported as occurring in 1915) without scenery or orchestra and with himself at the piano, accompanying the singers. Several subsequent performances were announced but seem not to have been realized except for a single concert version in 1915 of Frolic of the Bears, the ballet from act 2, by the Martin-Smith Music School in 1915.

Fifty-five years after Joplin’s death in 1917, Treemonisha finally had its real, complete premiere. This occurred on January 28, 1972, at the Atlanta Memorial Arts Center, produced by the Afro-American Music Workshop of Morehouse College. An enthusiastic audience greeted this momentous event as the vindication of a long-ignored work by an African-American composer. But no one could have anticipated its explosive effect on those who attended. New York Times critic Harold Schonberg (1972) wrote that the finale, “A Real Slow Drag,” “is amazing. Harmonically enchanting, full of the tensions of an entire race, rhythmically catching, it refuses to leave the mind. The audience tonight went out of its mind… There were yells and great smiles of happiness.” The cast included student dancers and chorus but was otherwise fully professional: an orchestra by T. J. Anderson (Joplin’s original is lost) conducted by Robert Shaw; choreography and staging by Katherine Dunham; and key roles given to opera singers of significant stature, such as Alpha Floyd as Treemonisha and Simon Estes as Ned, her stepfather.

Barley a half year passed before the mounting of a second production at Wolf Trap, near Washington, D.C. Professional dancers and chorus replaced the students, but the cast remained mostly the same; William Bolcom’s new orchestration replaced Anderson’s. The success and enthusiasm generated by these performances whetted the public appetite for more, but few performances were permitted by the Lottie Joplin Thomas Trust, which held the copyright. The most momentous production came almost three years later, in May 1975, from the Houston Grand Opera (Carmen Balthrop as Treemonisha, with yet another orchestration, this time by Gunther Schuller). Following its Houston run, the opera went on to the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and then to an extended run in two theaters on Broadway. The Pulitzer committee, acknowledging the phenomenal popular resurgence of Scott Joplin’s rags and the successful performance of his opera, awarded him a special Bicentennial Pulitzer Prize in 1976.

All three of the major Treemonisha productions achieved critical and public acclaim. However, only the vision of the Houston Grand Opera has been preserved on commercial recording and video, making it the measure of all subsequent stagings.

Now free of copyright restrictions, the opera is available to any interested parties. The Opera Theatre of St. Louis staged Treemonisha in May and June 2000, in another thrilling and exuberant production. Scott Joplin, in his wildest fantasies, could hardly have envisioned finer singers, more expressive choreography, or more imaginative, sensitive staging. Although inescapably influenced by the Houston Grand Opera production, the Opera Theatre managed to offer a new perspective. One might say that Houston, with its colorful costuming and portrayals of fantastic animals, presented the opera as a fable; St. Louis sported more realistic earth tones, both in the costumes and in the sets.

But the more subdued colors of St. Louis did not produce somberness. Imaginative staging and stage business make the work lively and beautifully fill out Joplin’s bare instructions. Treemonisha (played by Christina Clark) demonstrates her signal trait of literacy by reading to the children. The conjurer Zodzerrick (Jermaine Smith) affects a suitably malevolent persona. Parson Alttalk (Derrick Parker), while admonishing the villagers to treat their neighbors right, steps over to deliver the message at close range to two children squabbling over a book; in another scene, he affects clerical hypocrisy (with Joplin continuing the African-American stage tradition of poking fun at its clergy) by grabbing a liquor jug from one of the workers and then taking a furtive swig himself. This all works and adds life and believability to the opera.

One staging decision, though, puzzles me. While faces in the chorus of villagers are easily overlooked and can be
applauded as the other side of race-neutral casting. But one white face on stage cannot be ignored, that of a white foreman (as he is identified in the cast listing), better dressed than the others and carrying a whip. He has no singing role and usually stands on the side, apart from the action. Yet, he is clearly an authority figure: like Parson Alltall, he grabs the liquor jug from a field hand. Then, in the barbershop quartet scene, he looks on menacingly as the fieldhands sing “We Will Rest Awhile.”

But Joplin’s score has no such foreman; the preface states that the white owners had abandoned the plantation, leaving Nad (Kevin Short), Treemonisha’s stepfather, in charge of the self-contained black community. In this context, two decades after the Civil War, a whip-carrying, white overseer is markedly out of place.

A staging decision highlighted by the Opera Theatre’s public relations pertains to Joplin’s use of stereotypical Negro dialect (see Tommasini 2000). Joplin applied dialect to differentiate between the uneducated (the majority of the community) and the lettered (Treemonisha and, to a lesser extent, her friend and rescuer Remus, played by Nathan Granner). This distinction probably reflects an issue important to Joplin, as contemporaneous interviewers often noted his educated manner and refined speech.

Perhaps to head off criticism of those offended by such dialect, as “Who dat woman dey am bringin’ wid ‘em?,” the Houston Grand Opera’s production team substituted standard English. The St. Louis producers decided to remain faithful to Joplin’s vision.

In practice, the distinction was not great. The dialect in the St. Louis production was barely noticeable unless one focused on it, and in the Houston Grand Opera video, an occasional “dis” and “dem” slips through.

But the issue remains. To what extent should art bow to the caprice of current fashion, to the political correctness of the moment? Does the composer’s intent not deserve respect? Joplin’s dialect use should not be viewed in the company of the self-deprecating “coon” song of his era; he followed the more positive example of Paul Laurence Dunbar (although without Dunbar’s lyric style and skill). Joplin’s specific aim, to create an aural contrast between the uneducated and the educated, was unique neither in his own era nor in those to come. A generation later, Langston Hughes followed the same idea in his play Mulatto, distinguishing between an uneducated black woman kept by a Southern plantation owner and their Northern-educated children. Dialect continued as an important and effective tool in black literature throughout the twentieth century, as in the stories of Zora Neale Hurston and, more recently, those of Toni Cade Bambara.

Some critics will continue objecting to what they view as demeaning portrayals of African Americans, but for others, with more sympathy for the flavors of speech, dialect represents a precious element of folk culture. Nor is dialect a tool only for African-American writing. Could we imagine the BBC television series Upstairs, Downstairs in which the downstairs servants expressed themselves not in cockney accents but in the aristocratic tones of the upstairs inhabitants they served? Such staging would destroy the dramatic illusion. Similarly, in Joplin’s case, dialect reflects a time and place that is integral to his artistic expression.

Certainly, a performing organization has a legitimate concern in balancing its fidelity to the artistic vision with its desire to avoid offending and alienating the audience. The Opera Theatre sought to avoid misunderstanding of dialect use by having the distinguished scholar Gerald Early (2000) address the issue directly in a program-book essay.

The preliminary notes, preceding Early’s essay, give basic historical information but lack accuracy. They perpetuate the discredited assertion that Treemonisha’s first performance—the informal run-through of 1911—occurred in 1915. They also mischaracterize the Atlanta performance of 1972—with Simon Estes, Robert Shaw, et al.—as merely a nonprofessional, student production.

Dr. Early’s essay of six and a half pages also slips on a few details, mostly on musical matters. Porgy and Bess’s Catfish Row, set in Charleston, depicts a community that is neither isolated nor “highly rural” (Early 2000, 126). Treemonisha was not “rediscovered” in the early 1970s when Joplin’s music was enjoying a vague thanks to director George Hill’s use of Joplin’s rags in his 1973 film, The Sting” (130, 132).

Performances of the opera preceded the release of the film and, besides, the opera did not have to be “rediscovered,” never having been lost. Joplin deposited copies with the Library of Congress and the British Museum in 1911. His widow Lottie gave Rudi Blesh a copy in 1949, and Blesh loaned it freely to those who wanted to make photocopies; Max Morath made such a copy in 1961. In 1963, the Toronto-based Ragtime Societies tried (unsuccessfully) to generate interest among its members for a subscription reprint of the entire opera (cost, $12.50). In 1965, the opera workshop of Utah State University performed and recorded excerpts. Before the end of the 1960s, a number of musicians were passing the score around. One could not buy an edition of Treemonisha at a music store, but anyone willing to search could find a copy.

However, with regard to his core issue—Negro dialect in literature of the time and its importance in Joplin’s opera—Early (2000, 128) offers a strong and convincing case: “In most black literature of this period the rule was simple: educated black characters did not speak in dialect; uneducated ones did.” In Treemonisha, he maintains, removing the dialect homogenizes the language, puts everyone on the same educational level as the heroine, and thereby alters the work’s dramatic force. In retaining Joplin’s original dialect, the Opera Theatre of St. Louis presents a Treemonisha that has both theatrical spirit and artistic integrity.

References


Pledges for the Center’s NEH Challenge Grant

As announced in the last issue of CBMR Digest, the Center is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant. These special grants are designed to assist the recipient in raising substantial financial support over a given period of time. The Center’s NEH grant is in the amount of $450,000, and the terms of the grant require that the Center raise three times that amount ($1,350,000) in matching funds. The resulting $1,800,000 will be placed in an endowment fund that will generate interest income sufficient to support aspects of the Center’s operations. In awarding a Challenge Grant to the Center for Black Music Research, the National Endowment for the Humanities has formally recognized the high value of the Center as an institution and the necessity for the perpetuation of its work.

Pledges and contributions to the NEH Challenge Grant matching funds may be made at any time during the term of the grant, which expires in July 2003. The first goal of raising $500,000 was satisfied on July 31, 2000. Three goals remain to be met: $250,000 must be raised in pledges or gifts by July 31, 2001; $550,000 by July 31, 2002; and $500,000 by July 31, 2003.

Your pledge or gift at this time will help the Center maintain its high level of productivity. Please consider making the Center a high priority for your giving during the coming years, including your year-end contributions for 2000. Your donation will be tax-exempt to the full extent allowed by law. For those of you who work in the corporate world, please investigate the availability of matching funds from your employer.

Through its public programming, publications, teaching, and the CBMR Library and Archives, the Center for Black Music Research addresses issues that are critical to the understanding of American music and to the celebration of African-derived musical cultures. Please join the NEH in supporting the Center by adding your own generous support to theirs or by contributing to the Center’s operating fund.

You may make your contribution or pledge using the form below or by visiting the Center’s secure Web site at www.cbmr.org/NEHContribute.htm.

Thank you for your generosity.

CHALLENGE GRANT MATCHING FUND

Donor Pledge

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded Columbia College Chicago’s Center for Black Music Research a $450,000 challenge grant that must be matched three-to-one ($1,350,000), thus yielding a $1.8 million endowment.

Please accept my/our gift pledge to match and to be expended for the approved purposes of the National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant.

I/we intend to donate $________________________ (TOTAL AMOUNT)
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I/we wish to fulfill my/our commitment in the following way:

☐ Outright gift of cash or securities on the following dates:

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or as follows:

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Columbia College Chicago is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, charitable, and educational organization. All contributions to the Center for Black Music Research NEH Challenge Grant Matching Fund are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Columbia College Chicago will manage the endowment fund according to terms prescribed by the NEH.